

THANK YOU TO STEPHEN ANGELL FROM AVP AUSTRALIA

What better way for AVP Australia to reflect on the first 20 years of AVP in Australia than with this thank you message to the man who first brought AVP to Australia in 1991 and 1992 and returned in 1995.

Thank you, Stephen for your generosity and enthusiasm in bringing AVP to Australia. The ripples you started in 1991 have spread wider than anyone could have envisaged in the first few years. AVP has reached the eight state and territories in Australia. Australian AVP facilitators have taken AVP and AVP spin-off programs to, and influenced people in, many of the countries in the Asia West Pacific Region.

Thank you, Stephen for your wisdom and vision of AVP. You showed and modeled for us how AVP learning is not a conflict resolution skill set learnt from the outside but personal transformation of the self from within. Many people's lives have benefited and continue to benefit in many settings in prisons, in communities, in schools and youth groups, in indigenous communities in the cities and rural areas, interfaith groups, amongst newly arrived refugees and in developing countries in this area of the world.

Thank you Smiling Steve for the love and inspiration you gave to those in AVP whose lives you directly touched in your time in Australia. You have been described as a calm and calming presence – a true gentle man. AVP and nonviolence came from your centre. You exuded acceptance and love. While others present conflict resolution techniques as armour on the outside of us you spoke from a heart of peace, at peace thus you called us to being peace-able (able to make peace). You called 'that of God' out of us all rather than adding techniques. You greatly influenced our work from that time on. We realised that we need to look to our centre and respond from there. Just offering tools couldn't change our knee-jerk position when the going gets tough. The action-reflection model of AVP just made sense for the need to make that change at the centre of each person. Stephen, you truly listened and helped us hear from our centre and find what we already knew. It was as if you called forth truth that we knew at our centre and challenged us to act from that truth.

You have been a presence inviting people into the group formed by the facilitators, inviting into a place that empowers us to change.

Thank you Stephen for your blessing and support for the fledgling group that developed AVP inspired programs and took them into schools and colleges. It was an honour to share with you in New Zealand in 2004 the success of the program that at that stage had reached more than 30,000 students across Australia and to see your joy and humble pride in this outreach.

We from Australia join together in the worldwide celebration of Stephen's life of giving and inspiration that has contributed to the spread of AVP internationally. Stephen we acknowledge and thank you.

AVP Australia Network
On behalf of AVP Australia
May 2011